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CHARLES FITZHUGH TALMAN, 1874-1936

Charles Fitzhugh Talman (Aug. 31, 1874, Detroit, Mich.—July 24, 1936, Washington, D. C.), meteorologist and writer, was the son of Robert Fitzhugh Talman, who was born at Rochester, N. Y., and Jessica (Mack) Talman, born near St. Claire, Mich. On his father's side he was descended from Dr. John Talman, one of the founders of Hudson, N. Y., whose son, John Thurston Talman, married Mary Eleanor Fitzhugh, daughter of Col. William Fitzhugh, one of the founders of Rochester, N. Y., and a grandson of the English emigrant, William Fitzhugh ("Fighting Billy") of Ravensworth, Va., who was noted for his integrity and legal ability. On his mother's side, an early ancestor was Col. Andrew Mack (born Mar. 9, 1780, at Windsor, Conn.), a colorful character in the early development of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Detroit, Mich. In 1829 Colonel Mack moved from Cincinnati to Detroit, having been appointed Collector of the Port by President Andrew Jackson. He was one of the original owners of the Detroit Free Press, served in the legislatures of both Ohio and Michigan, and was Mayor of Detroit during 1834-35.

Charles Fitzhugh Talman was educated in the Detroit public schools, Detroit High School (graduated June 1892) and Kalamazoo College, and by private tutors.

He was appointed Observer in the United States Weather Bureau on October 2, 1896, and stationed at Norfolk, Va. In 1898-99 he had charge of Weather Bureau stations in the West Indies and on the Caribbean coast of South America, being stationed at Colon, Colombia (now Canal Zone), August 19, 1898-June 6, 1899, and at Kingston, Jamaica, June 6, 1899-September 11, 1899. He was then recalled to the States and located for brief periods at Boston, Mass., Springfield, Ill., and Buffalo, N. Y., in the order given. On May 9, 1900, he was called to the Central Office of the Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C., where he was later appointed Assistant Librarian on December 11, 1907, and Librarian on July 1, 1908. On July 16, 1914, he was promoted to Professor of Meteorology, and continued in charge of the library. On September 1, 1935, he became Meteorologist by official title, and Meteorological Consultant by assignment of duties—a recognition of what, in fact, he had been for many years, and for which he was especially fitted by his wide acquaintance with the literature of the subject and his knowledge of many languages, including Greek and Latin.

The sixty-thousand-volume meteorological library of which Mr. Talman had charge is second to none of its kind, and was raised to this rank largely by his wise selections and persistent efforts. Not only is it a vast storehouse of potential knowledge but, with Talman to guide and assist, it was an inexhaustible fund of ready information. It was not necessary to tell him what particular book one wanted, but sufficient to ask what had been published on such and such a subject, for imme-

diately all the literature bearing on it would be placed at one's disposal, and to all alike, high position or no position, with the same unfailing kindness and ever readiness to help. In his presence none could feel superior and none was made to feel inferior.

In figure he was trim and slightly tall; in dress neat and tasteful; and in movement rapid and sure, even during the last month of his life, when much of the time he was too ill to be at his office.

He contributed many articles to the New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, Nature Magazine, American Mercury, etc.; wrote for several reference books and for the Standard Dictionary (1910-11); and wrote the daily newspaper feature, "Why the Weather?", syndicated by Science Service—nearly 3,000 separate articles, from April 25, 1927. In addition to this immense amount of high-class journalistic work he also published two delightful books: "Meteorology, the Science of the Atmosphere" (Colliers, 1922), republished by Reynolds Publishing Co., N. Y., 1925, as "Our Weather"; and "The Realm of the Air" (Bobbs-Merrill, 1931). And all his writings, from articles for the daily press to books for the library, were both pleasing and safe—excellent in style and accurate in statement. The service he thus rendered the public, and the intelligent support he won for the science of the weather, are incalculably great. Fortunate it is that the good men do is not always buried with them.

Such was Talman's work, apart from the endless routine requirements of his position, and the supplying of information in response to daily inquiries from all sorts of people on all manner of subjects; and his hobby, meteorological lexicography, was even more exacting and, if possible, more valuable. To this encyclopedic meteorological dictionary he gave the most careful and persistent attention for many years, and accumulated for it a vast fund of information and references, all arranged in systematic alphabetical order. Those of us, and we are many, who have had occasion to consult the manuscript of this great dictionary, know how exceedingly helpful it is, and realize, too, that, so far as possible, it just must be completed and made available to all who may need it.

He was a member of the American Meteorological Society (councilor, 1921-22); the Geophysical Union; the District of Columbia Library Association, etc., and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

On November 16, 1909, he married Miss Grace Fletcher Edes of Washington, D. C., daughter of the late Lt. Comdr. B. L. Edes, U. S. N. Their children are Constance Elizabeth Marjorie (Nov. 27, 1910), who married (November 8, 1935) Señor Mario Rodriguez of the Chilean Diplomatic Service; and Benjamin Long Edes (Aug. 13, 1912), a graduate of the Naval Academy, and an officer in the United States Navy.—*W. J. Humphreys.*